

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANT(s): Hofmeister et al.

SERIAL NO.: 10/624,987

ART UNIT: 3652

FILING DATE: 7/22/03

EXAMINER: G. Adams

TITLE: SUBSTRATE PROCESSING APPARATUS

ATTORNEY

DOCKET NO.: 390P011010-US (PAR)

Board of Patent Appeals  
& Interferences  
Commissioner of Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

**REPLY BRIEF**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

This is in response to the Examiner's Answer mailed 5/1/07 in regard to the above-identified patent application.

In regard to Section 10B, the Examiner confuses the meaning of the words "different" and "isolated". The words "isolated" and "different" have very different meanings. The Examiner's equating "isolated" with "different" is wrong.

The Examiner lists various characteristics of atmosphere (e.g. air pressure, wind, air purity, air particulates, humidity, dew points and/or temperatures), however fails to identify where Mizokawa discloses how any of the atmosphere characteristics of the interior atmosphere of the transport chamber 14 are isolated from (and not merely different) than atmosphere characteristics of the atmosphere exterior to the transport chamber. The

Examiner's argument appears specious at best. The Examiner appears to argue that for example in the case of two chambers communicating with each other via an opening(s), by merely placing a fan inside one chamber (or in the communication opening(s) between the chambers) thereby raising air velocity, total pressure, temperature in one chamber relative the other chamber, the atmosphere of one chamber becomes isolated from the atmosphere of the other chamber. Clearly this is not the case. The atmospheres may be different between the two chambers, but hardly isolated from each other. Similarly if one was to place a heater or filter between the two otherwise communicating chambers, there would be no isolation of atmospheres between chambers. The chambers may be provided with different atmospheres in such a manner, but not isolated atmospheres. Different atmospheres, such as disclosed in Mizokawa, are just different, not isolated. (Conversely, it is noted that, isolated atmospheres may have the same characteristics, e.g. pressure, temperature, etc.)

The Examiner appears to agree with the Applicant that Mizokawa discloses air inlets and outlets into the transport chamber 14, but misconstrues the Applicant's argument. Contrary to the assertion by the Examiner in the Answer, Applicant's argument is not that Mizokawa fails to disclose a clean atmosphere inside the transport chamber 14, because the transport chamber has openings communicating with the exterior atmosphere (presumably, as noted before, the source of large quantities of filtered air injected into the transport chamber). Instead, the Applicant states that Mizokawa fails to disclose that the transport chamber is capable of holding an isolated atmosphere isolated from the atmosphere exterior to the transport chamber because of the inlet and outlet openings in the transport chamber communicating with the exterior. As has been stated before by the Applicant, Mizokawa

indeed disclose that the transport chamber holds a clean atmosphere, but this does not mean it is capable of holding an isolated atmosphere isolated from exterior atmosphere as otherwise called for in claims 1, 10 and 20. Claims 1,10, and 20 are patentable and should be allowed.

For all of the foregoing reasons, the Board is requested to reverse the Examiner's rejection of claims 1, 10 and 20.

Respectfully submitted,



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Janik Marcovici  
Reg. No. 42,841  
Perman & Green, LLP  
425 Post Road  
Fairfield, CT 06824  
(203) 259-1800  
Customer No.: 2512

7/2/07  
Date

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